



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



KING RENÉ AND HIS MUSICAL COURT

*Miniature reproduction from the Breviary of King René, a XV century manuscript in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*

## ROYAL MUSICIANS : THEIR ATTRIBUTIONS AND COMPOSITIONS

BY JULIUS MATTFELD

WE are prone in our late day amid the passing of traditions to think of sovereigns and potentates of all kind largely in the capacity of governmental functionaries. The fault is not ours, for history is severe in its chronicles and passes over the intimate details of character and personal gossip which always make for interest in memoirs and books of reminiscences. Our study, therefore, takes up one of the less familiar chapters in the lives of men (and women) whose prominence in history scarcely suggests a preoccupation with the creative phases of the fine arts.

It was Euclid, we are told, who pointed out to Ptolemy that there existed no royal road to geometry. And in spite of the excellent counsel, monarchs, great and small, of every generation, have attempted the forms of artistic expression, and, curiously, none more often than those of music. The list of royal musicians is comparatively a long one, and holds a score or more of the popular names of ancient and modern history.

Even in remote times, the great sovereigns felt it incumbent upon themselves to include music in the royal policy, and in certain notable instances, as in the case of King David, have cultivated the art themselves upon an extensive scale. David, in this respect, exerted a far-reaching influence in developing the Jewish service of song. He instituted not only the elaborate musical worship of the Temple, with which the readers of the Book of Psalms are acquainted, but, confirming the privileges of the ecclesiastical musicians known as the Levites, reduced their practices to

a system in a manner probably similar to the modes of Saints Ambrose and Gregory. Of the One Hundred and Fifty Psalms, six are accredited and some eighteen assumed to be of David's authorship; whether he also prepared or actually composed outright the musical settings cannot now be determined. David, at any rate, has been at all times regarded as the type of royal musician, and he is seldom mentioned in scriptural narrative without a reference to music in some form—either he plays upon the *kinnor* (a small Hebrew harp or lyre) himself or he directs the musical performance of his attendants.

David, however, was only one of the rulers of Biblical times to require music for public occasions. We not infrequently find in sculptures and friezes of ancient tombs and ruins figures of Babylonian and Egyptian kings leading in festivities of song and instrumental music. In later Greek times, Solon, archon of Athens, sought to rouse the spirit of his countrymen by song to reconquer the lost port of Salamis. But we cannot amplify upon the subject of ancient royal musicians. An interesting paper alone might be made of the overweening musical conceit of the Roman emperors Caligula and Nero. And we must equally pass over, with a bare mention, the laudable efforts of the emperors Titus and Hadrian and the Christian Constantine.

We come now to a consideration of one of the most interesting of monarchs as a musician—the great Charlemagne. Coming to the throne in very troublous times, he wisely chose King David as his model. It was therefore natural that he should

devote considerable attention to musical matters. He was a frank admirer of the Gregorian style of chant, and during the forty-odd years of his reign, caused the system of St. Gregory to be widely introduced in France and Germany, even founding schools for the purpose. With like enthusiasm he fostered singing at his court, especially of the old and legendary songs of France, the collection of which he instigated; and Charlemagne is said to have often taken the lead himself in such performances. In short, then, musical development in France owes obviously more to his personal efforts and zeal than to his own attainments in the art, although little with any certainty is known of these.

The Middle Ages afford us numerous instances of royal musicians. It was the period of troubadours, trouvères, and minnesingers, and monarchs deemed it no degradation to be counted among their numbers. Strange to say, the earliest troubadour of modern knowledge was one Guilhem IX., Seventh Count of Poitiers and Ninth Duke of Aquitaine, who wrote from 1087 to 1127. Of his work only one song is extant in words and music. In the case of other troubadours and trouvères, a richer heritage has been preserved for us. Lack of space prevents us from speaking individually of these poet-musicians; suffice it to call to mind merely the notorious Thibaut, Count of Champagne and Brie, King of Navarre (1201-ca.1254) and René I. of Anjou, a picture of whose court we bring. To this period belong as well the sacred pieces of Alfonso X., surnamed the Wise, of Castile.

England as early as the ninth century possessed already a musical monarch in Alfred the Great. We are all conversant with the story of his visit to the Danish camp in the guise of a minstrel and of his subsequent performance upon the harp. And we need not retell the episode of

Canute and the monks of Ely. Most of the early kings of England seem to have been musically inclined—even so staunch a crusader as Richard the Lion-hearted, minstrel and patron of Blondel.

A brief notice, however, must be allotted Henry VI. A ruler of pious and unwarlike temper, his interests were chiefly occupied with religion and art, particularly architecture, and he is reputed to have set parts of the Mass to music. The MS. is preserved in Old Hall, England, and was published in a German periodical in 1901.

But Henry VIII. deserves our serious consideration. He was at once a liberal patron of music and a creditable composer himself. He was destined from youth to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, and was duly instructed in music, which was at that time an essential feature of the requirements of an ecclesiastic. Now, Henry was fairly prolific as a composer and could indeed write an effective song. His works include compositions in various forms and many have been preserved in manuscript in the British Museum. His most ambitious efforts were two masses, now no longer extant, and besides an English anthem, sometimes attributed to Mundy, Henry wrote at least two Latin motets. In secular vein, he is given the credit of a quantity of vocal music and of instrumental pieces for three and four viols. All belong to the earlier years of Henry's life; and it is to be regretted that the religious questions in which he became involved so soon compelled him to relinquish his musical activities correspondingly, albeit he never completely gave up his court performances. Several of Henry's compositions are available in modern editions; and in the memorable production of *Henry VIII.* by the late Sir Herbert Tree, three years ago, during the tercentenary celebration of Shakespeare's death, the Eng-

lish actor introduced one of Henry's own songs—"Pastime with good company," which, despite its jolly title, is written in the minor tonality. It was a happy feature of the performance, this trick of stage management, and quite amusing to witness bluff King Hal conducting the singing at the banquet of Cardinal Wolsey.

Henry's women-folk were not a whit less musical. Certain of his wives seem to have been capable performers upon either the keyed or plucked instruments of the period. Catherine of Aragon should be mentioned as one. Another was the unfortunate Anne Boleyn, to whom tradition, with good reason, ascribes the song, "O death, rock me asleep," which Anne is believed to have written in prison, awaiting her execution.

Elizabeth, Henry's daughter, too, seems to have inherited a share of the Tudor talents. She was, pardonably, proud of her abilities in virginal playing, and to judge from the pieces in her "virginal-book," these must have been of no slight order. At any rate, she was inordinately pleased to be told by a courtier that she played better than the Queen of Scots, of whom she was always more or less jealous. Of course, Elizabeth's music-masters were superior to the scoundrel David Riccio, whom Mary's husband, Henry Darnley, King of Scotland, had conspired to have murdered in her presence for his political duplicities. Mary, on the other hand, was able to go Elizabeth one better, for she actually composed a number of songs.

James VI. of Scotland, and first of the name in England, is negligible. A song, "The pawky auld carle came over the Lee," appeared in a musical miscellany in 1731, where the words and melody are ascribed to his pen.

And the ill-fated Charles I. is credited with a pleasing little ditty beginning "Mark how the blushfull morn," also pre-

served in manuscript in the British Museum. The words are from the pen of Thomas Carew.

Meanwhile, the French kings had not ceased to interest themselves in music. Charlemagne died in 814; and it was not long before the next musical monarch came to the throne—Robert the Wise, or as he is sometimes, the Pious (ca. 970–1031). He was both poet and composer, and is accredited with the composition of Latin hymns and responsives. One of the latter found its way into a method of plain-song several centuries later.

Worthy of mention, in passing here, is Henri IV., murdered in 1610, whose *Charmante Gabrielle* may be familiar to our readers. The song has been used for the theme of a set of variations by Onslow and has served other composers in similar ways. The air is given in Mary Schell Bacon's book of "Songs Every Child Should Know" (p. 23).

Louis XIII. was the musical monarch of France *par excellence*. Like his father, Henri IV., Louis was a good musician and a dilettante in the true and polite sense of the term. He was passionately fond of music, and divided his attention in somewhat equal proportion between its cultivation and his favorite sports of hunting and chess. To the *concerts intimes* which he organized not infrequently at his court, he admitted few persons, always excluding the women—"they cannot keep quiet," he said. The programme invariably closed with a work of his creation. These pieces were naturally well received, and Louis was naïve enough to repeat them three and four times successively at the same concert. One of his most charming compositions has come down to our day, in the song "Amaryllis," of which Louis wrote both words and music, in 1620, in honor of Mme. d'Hauteville, whom he constantly celebrated under this idyllic

pseudonym. The song should not be confused with the popular gavotte of the same name, arranged for piano by Ghys. This melody is wrongly ascribed to Louis XIII. It was composed before Louis' time by Baltazarini, known as Beaujoyeux, a composer at the court of Henri III., and produced at the wedding entertainment of Margaret of Lorraine in 1581. Louis wrote also much church-music, on one occasion composing a whole vesper service for the army besieging La Rochelle; and at his death some of his own music was sung as his requiem.

Almost all of the queens of France were musical to a greater or lesser degree, and studied the art. Marie Antoinette, for instance, composed pretty little tunes in the quaint, half-pastoral style of the epoch. And the kings generally took an active part in support of different schools of composition.

Like the English monarchs, the German emperors displayed a lively interest in music. Many of them in olden times, like Ferdinand III., Leopold I., Joseph I., and Karl VI., each succeeding the other, attempted forms of musical composition, or were in some way identified with music. We cannot here speak at length of the princes, dukes, and lesser personages, such as Ludwig the Rich of Bavaria, Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, Heinrich XXIV, of Reuss, or of the former emperor, William Hohenzollern, grand dabbler in everything, who gave the world in 1901 his farcical *Sang an Ägir*. He had, moreover, the shameful audacity to interpolate in a Berlin performance of *Oberon* the character of Barbarossa (see Schelking's *Recollections of a Russian Diplomat*, 1919). But we must devote our closing lines to Frederick the Great.

Frederick was, indeed, the most venturesome of royal musicians. He studied organ with Hayn and flute, under unique

difficulties, with the austere Quantz. Frederick's father, Frederick William I., was averse to his son's musical studies, and Frederick was obliged to circumvent his father's vigilance. Thus, when the royal step was heard, flutes, music, everything, hurriedly disappeared, and the teacher found a place of hiding in the chimney; and Frederick, shrewdly, engaged musical servants, like the valet Fredersdorf, with whom he could often play duets. On his accession to the throne in 1740, Frederick established a court band at Berlin, sent the composer Graun to Italy to import singers, and entertained the great Johann Sebastian Bach at Potsdam among other celebrities. Moreover, Frederick was indefatigable as a composer himself. He wrote innumerable solos for his flute, arias, marches, portions of an opera *Il re pastore*, and supplied an overture to *Galatea ed Acide*. Frederick died in 1786; and in 1835 Frederick William III. instituted a search for Frederick's compositions. One hundred and twenty pieces came to light. They were edited by Bach's biographer, Spitta, and published in 1889.

We will end our ramble through history with a note on the *Hymno Imperial Constitucional* of Portugal (the country had had a prominent musical monarch in João IV. during the first half of the seventeenth century). The hymn was written and composed by Dom Pedro I., Emperor of Brazil, who became Pedro IV. of Portugal in 1822, and the song served as the official hymn on all state occasions. When Don Carlos I. ascended the throne in 1889, an effort was made to supersede it by another that had been specially prepared and distributed among the troops. The new piece, however, was found to be inadequate, and the *Hymno Nacional* was restored to its place of honor as the national song of Portugal.